

September 30, 2009

## NorQuest College launches Centre for Excellence in Learning Supports Edmonton's community college a recognized leader in providing customized learning supports and services to students with disabilities

EDMONTON – NorQuest College officially launched its Centre for Excellence in Learning Supports on Wednesday, September 30. The Centre's aim is to provide national leadership in the development and utilization of cutting-edge technologies and support services to students with disabilities. Through customized, comprehensive and responsive academic support services, students with diverse needs can achieve their academic and employment goals. Centre staff at NorQuest will also collaborate with other post-secondary institutions and disability service providers, share evidence-based best practices, and serve as advocates to enhance accessibility for learners with disabilities.

"The future success of our province depends on the knowledge and skills of Albertans," said Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. "This is a meaningful addition to Campus Alberta, supporting our goals of increasing access to learning and employment opportunities."

"NorQuest is a recognized leader in developing and providing quality, practical and effective learning support services," said Dr. Wayne Shillington, President and CEO, NorQuest College. "The award-winning NorQuest Reader is a prime example of how NorQuest is creating assistive technologies with a universal design. The Reader is a multimedia resource that helps students who are deaf learn how to read and comprehend English, and it is also a useful resource for students in English language training."

NorQuest College serves more than 500 students with disabilities each year and works closely with government, businesses and community organizations to strengthen support services within communities across Alberta.

Examples of assistive technology:

- JAWS text-to-speech translation software assists students who are visually impaired
- NorQuest Reader software improves English reading skills for adult learners who are deaf or hearing impaired
- Read and Write Gold software helps students with learning disabilities improve their reading and writing skills

Examples of alternate formats:

- Braille
- Conversion of textbooks and other print materials to audio
- Large print type
- American Sign Language (ASL) dictionary
- Special classroom materials for students with learning disabilities

The Centre for Excellence in Learning Supports is one of five centres for excellence at NorQuest College including Print Media, Education for Continuing Care, Aboriginal Learning, and Intercultural Education.

NorQuest College has campuses in Edmonton, Wetaskiwin and Stony Plain, community learning centres in seven other Alberta communities and provides online distance learning to over 200 Canadian communities. NorQuest delivers post-secondary diploma and certificate programs in a variety of health, human services, business and industry careers and offers expertise in adult literacy, academic upgrading, English as a Second Language (ESL), Aboriginal education, and learner supports for students with disabilities. NorQuest serves more than 10,000 full and part-time students each year and has been designated by the Alberta government as the regional steward responsible for the Edmonton region, from Camrose to Jasper and Drayton Valley to Whitecourt.

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For more information on this release please contact:

Diana Lake  
Communications Advisor, NorQuest College  
Office: 780-644-5814 Cell: 780-953-0364  
[diana.lake@norquest.ca](mailto:diana.lake@norquest.ca)